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Jan. 7, 1821. Died in Holles-Street, Cavendish-square, in the 79th year of her age, Mrs. Anne Hunter, widow of that distinguished physiologist John Hunter. . . . Mrs. Hunter was the eldest daughter of Mr. Robert Home, an eminent surgeon, first in the army and latterly at the Savoy. He had several other children; among whom another daughter was married to Mr. Mylne, the architect of Blackfriars Bridge; and a third, though no less amiable than her sisters, died unmarried. His sons were, Robert, bred as an artist, and now painter to the King of Lucknow, in India; Colonel Home, an officer in the Bombay establishment, now retired; and Sir Everard Home, Bart. the very eminent pupil of his brother-in-law. In 1771 Miss Home was married to Mr. John Hunter. . . . Mrs. J. Hunter became the mother of four children, of whom only two survive. . . . Since Mrs. H. became a widow, she has lived in quiet retirement, though in London. . . . Native genius was never more pleasingly united with female delicacy than in Mrs. John Hunter. . . . With every grace that could make her interesting in society, she had every personal and social virtue that could command respect and attachment. As a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother, and a friend, she was anxious always to exceed, rather than in the smallest degree to fail in any of her duties. The natural warmth and energy of her heart prevented, indeed, the possibility of such defect. . . . By those who best knew her, she will be lamented, in proportion to the admiration and attachment which she could not fail to inspire; and it may be said with confidence that she has not left a survivor in the world who can have either a right or a wish to detract the smallest particle from the commendations, here or elsewhere bestowed, upon her genius, her understanding, or her heart.¹

So wrote, for her obituary, Anne Home Hunter's friend of long standing, the Venerable Robert Nares. Nares, once Chaplain to the Duke of York and assistant preacher at Lincoln's Inn, later Archdeacon of Stafford and Canon of Lichfield, founder of the *British Critic*, and assistant librarian and keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum, had known the Homes for many years. He had been a schoolmate of Everard's at Westminster, as Everard remembered in the dedication to the second volume of the second edition of the *Practical Observations on the Treatment of Strictures in the Urethra*. "Allow me to dedicate the second [edition of this volume] to you," Sir Everard addressed Nares, "with whom I have lived in habits of uninterrupted intimacy for half a century."

* Department of Biology, Bryn Mawr College. in Nichols, *Illustrations of Literary History* 7
638-40.

¹ Nares [Letter to J. B. Nichols, Esq.],

"The circumstances under which our intimacy had its origin are highly honourable to you. . . . Whoever remembers what Westminster College was in our time, will acknowledge, that it was no common occurrence for a Senior to inspire his Junior with a lasting friendship for him."² The volume bearing these remarks was issued in 1821, the year Anne Hunter died, and we may presume that Nares' half century of intimacy with Everard included Anne during the greater part of fifty years.

The Archdeacon's eulogy of Mrs. Hunter becomes of primary significance to John Hunter's admirers, since it focuses attention at once on two aspects of Mrs. Hunter's qualities—firstly, the basis for her endearment to John himself, and secondly the manner in which she linked John, even though indirectly, to his literary contemporaries. It is a fact of singular interest that Mrs. Hunter was in her own right a figure of eminence in the literary circles of eighteenth century London; and for those who are accustomed to celebrate her husband John as one of the dominant leaders of eighteenth-century British science, it may be enlightening to point out the distinction which his wife attained, in her own quiet and unassuming way.

The Archdeacon's words of admiration were strong ones; yet lest the cautious reader accuse him of undue prejudice, we can show that similar qualities in Mrs. Hunter's character were emphasized by others, friend and foe alike of John. There is the letter, for instance, written by Tommy Shippen, son of William Shippen, Jr. and Alice Shippen, who visited Anne in London around 1787 and wrote home to his mother, an old friend of Anne's:

From her appearance you would suppose her 23 or 30 years of age,³ & she is graceful, genteel & elegant beyond anything I have seen in England. . . . I am sure I do no injustice to Mr Hunter in giving M^{rs} Hunter the sole credit of the elegant arrangement of everything I saw at the house and I might also say that I had seen nothing so elegant as the entertainment of this day since I have been here. Lord Lansdown forms the only exception.⁴

² Home, *Practical Observations on the Treatment of Strictures in the Urethra*, 2d ed., vol. 2, dedication, n.p.

³ She was born in 1742, and must then have been around 45.

⁴ Livingston, *Nancy Shippen, her Journal Book*, 253-54. William Shippen, Jr., familiar to Americans alike for his medical services during the Revolution and for his part in the foundation of the pioneer Medical Depart-

ment of the University of Pennsylvania, had studied with John Hunter and with his brother William Hunter. His wife, née Alice Lee, was a school friend of Anne Home's, and named her first daughter for her. Part of a letter from Anne Home Hunter to Mrs. Shippen, written on the occasion of Anne Home Shippen's birth, is recorded in Livingston, *op. cit.* 56-57.

Even Jesse Foot, John Hunter's most vituperative antagonist, had only good to say of Anne and her relationships to John:

To her he was directed not only by personal attractions, but also mental endowments, which she possesses in a very eminent degree. She has exhibited specimens of poetry in sonnets, which for beautiful fancy, and pleasing harmony, are excellent in their style: and from the blandishments of her natural disposition, he found the cares and asperities of his life soothed to the end,—as long as his heart continued to vibrate.⁵

We may trust to Shippenn and Nares and Foot for direct reports of Anne's grace and elegance and taste in matters worldly; but in addition we may derive indirectly an evaluation of her intellectual qualities, by inquiring who were the friends who visited her home in Leicester Square. Many of the "bluestockings"⁶ were among them, of that group of fashionable intellectual women who imitated the gatherings of the salons of Paris with their own "conversations" on literary and worldly affairs. "I have heard my Aunt Agnes⁷ speak of the celebrated people she met at Mrs. Hunter's," wrote Hunter's great-niece, Mrs. Milligan,⁸ "amongst whom she mentioned Lord Orford, Madame D'Arblay, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter (between whom and Mrs. Hunter was a personal regard) and also Mrs. Montague, whom my Aunt admired much."⁹

Agnes Baillie cannot be too implicitly trusted as to the extent of the intimacy between Mrs. Hunter and those she enumerated; she may have succumbed to the temptation of exaggerating the lofty connections of her family. This would seem to be suggested by Madame D'Arblay's own remarks about Anne. Fanny Burney, Charles Burney's daughter and the authoress of *Evelina*, noted in her diary for Monday of the third week of December 1782: "There was a very full assembly at Mrs. Thrale's, where I dined and spent the day. . . . Mr. Seward¹⁰ made me known to Mrs. Hunter, who is extremely pretty, and reckoned very ingenious."¹¹ Anne

⁵ Foot, *Life of John Hunter*, 240.

⁶ So named either in allusion to the blue stockings worn by Benjamin Stillingfleet, one of the moving spirits of the London group, or, more likely, to those affected at Madame de Polignac's salons in the Rue St. Honoré in Paris.

⁷ Agnes Baillie, John Hunter's niece, daughter of Dorothy Hunter Baillie and the Reverend James Baillie, D.D., sister of Matthew Baillie the physician and of Joanna Baillie, Sir Walter Scott's "immortal Joanna," the dramatist.

⁸ Mrs. Milligan was Elizabeth Margaret Baillie Milligan, Matthew Baillie's daughter and Agnes Baillie's niece.

⁹ Paget, *John Hunter*, 191. Original document in the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

¹⁰ William Seward, a literary dilettante. Anne Hunter wrote an elegy to his memory (Hunter, *Poems* 71–72). He was the only son of the brewer who became the rival of Mr. Thrale whose wife Hetty Thrale is familiar to us as Samuel Johnson's friend.

¹¹ D'Arblay, *Diary and Letters* 2. 147.

is not mentioned again in the diary until 1 May 1790, when Miss Burney spoke of her as though she had not meantime seen her (and spoke of her, by the way, perhaps in envy, in the only derogatory remarks I have ever found recorded against her). In a description of a recent gathering at the Pantheon, where fashionable London met and danced, she remarked: "Mrs. John Hunter, also, recollect me: I had once met her at an assembly at Mrs. Thrale's. She is a very fine woman, and highly accomplished; but with rather too much glare, both without and within."¹² Agnes Baillie presumably could have seen Miss Burney at parties at Mrs. Hunter's only between 1790 and 1793, since Mrs. Hunter ceased to entertain and lived a life of the quietest retirement after she became a widow in 1793. If she entertained Fanny formally as "Madame D'Arblay" she can have done so only between 28 July 1793, when Miss Burney became Madam D'Arblay, and 16 October that year, when Hunter died. Mrs. Milligan, however, designated Mrs. Hunter's friends by names to which they were only later entitled: Horace Walpole, for instance, became Lord Orford only in January 1792, and, as it will be shown below, he was friendly to Anne some years before his succession to the title.

There is no doubt, however, about Anne's friendship with the others listed by Mrs. Milligan as her friends. Anne wrote for Mrs. Carter, a distinguished student of literature and the classics, a translator of Epictetus, and a scholar for whom even Johnson had the highest respect, "Carisbrook Castle, a poem, with notes. . . . Inscribed to Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, by her most obliged, and affectionate friend and servant, the author. Jan. 6, 1802."¹³ She dedicated no published verses to Mrs. Montagu;¹⁴ but she addressed another to the friends of the bluestockings in verse, in the lines "To Mrs. Delainy, upon the marks of royal bounty which she received at a very advanced age, after the death of her friend the Duchess of Portland, in 1786:"

Delainy, far from courtly art,
My free lyre vibrates to my heart
 The simple notes of truth;
I joy to see thy virtuous age
With honours crown'd, a fair presage
 For well deserving youth.

¹² *Ibid.* 4. 375.

¹³ Hunter, *op. cit.* 39.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Robinson Montagu, the central figure of the bluestocking group in London.

Her husband was a cousin of Edward Wortley Montagu, and of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu who popularized the practice of inoculation against smallpox.

I joy to see desert repaid,
 And talents cherish'd in the shade,
 Unchill'd by evening's dew;
 Bright glows for thee thy setting sun,
 And ere thy mortal race is run,
 The goal appears in view.

.
 Nor has thy guardian spirit fled
 But still by steps unerring led
 To honour and repose;
 For in fair Windsor's royal seat
 Thy virtues find a calm retreat,
 And wait their final close.

.
 Sweet the delight of gen'rous deeds
 When from the heart the wish proceeds,
 Warm, noble and refin'd;
 How exquisite the grateful sense
 Of heav'n born, pure benevolence
 Upon the feeling mind!

Happy who thus have pow'r to give,
 Who thus with honour may receive,
 What just esteem bestows;
 While from the starry realms above
 The powers beneficent approve
 The source from whence it flows.¹⁵

While we may surmise from her lines to her literary friends the degree of her esteem for them, it is even more illuminating to ascertain from their own writings what they in turn thought of her. Here we have various sources of information. We can turn, for instance, to the notebooks of Samuel Johnson's friend Hetty Thrale, whose home at Streatham we know from Miss Burney that Mrs. Hunter visited. Mrs. Thrale may have known the Hunters since June 1777; her notebook for that month states, though to be sure we do not know whether she came upon this information directly or otherwise: "The heart of a Frog will not cease to beat says John Hunter for four hours after it has been torne from the Body of the Animal

¹⁵ Hunter, *op. cit.* 18–20. Mary Granville Delany, born in 1700, was a niece of the first Lord Lansdowne. Her first husband was Alexander Pendarves, her second Patrick Delany, Dean of Down, the intimate friend of Swift. She knew Swift and most of the other

literary figures of the day. She was a close friend of the Dowager Duchess of Portland on whose death George III and Queen Charlotte provided her with a cottage at Windsor and a pension of £300 a year.

Poor Creature—Il a bu jusqu' au lies la Coupe amère & douce de la Sensibilité, might Jean Jacques observe in this Place.”¹⁶ We know from Miss Burney that Mrs. Hunter visited Mrs. Thrale with Seward in 1782, and Mrs. Thrale’s notebook for 1782 reads:

M^r Seward picked up the Musick—or *thinks* he has, of the Song the Indians sing while their Tormentors are preparing and inflicting various Tortures upon them: it is well known that the North American Tribes do make their Prisoners endure the most bitter Agonies before Death; it is well known too, that they pique themselves on the Constancy with which they bear these Torments: M^{rs} John Hunter, Wife to the famous Anatomist has made a Base to the Tune; . . . I had no Notion She could write so well.¹⁷

Horace Walpole, who hovered occasionally among the bluestockings, was warm in his praise of her. He first mentioned her in the *Letters* in the spring of 1791, when he wrote to Mary Berry: “I am just come from Lady Herries, who with Mrs. Hunter charged me to tell you how glad they are to hear you are better of your fall.”¹⁸ He had known her far earlier, however: on 30 June 1784 he had personally escorted Lord Robert and Lady Herries and John and Anne Hunter through the collection of oddities at Strawberry Hill; Anne visited Strawberry Hill again on 19 June 1789, and Walpole himself exhibited the glories of his establishment to the Hunters and the Reverend Robert Nares on 26 June 1790.¹⁹ He hoped for another visit from the Hunters and Nares in 1793; he wrote Nares from Strawberry Hill 5 October 1793:

I have thought it long, Sir, since I had the pleasure of seeing you, and should have asked that satisfaction here, with the company of Mr. and Mrs. Hunter, who promised to acquaint me with their return; yet had they done so within these last ten or twelve weeks, I could not have profited by it. I have been ill of the gout in four or five parts, and produced from one of my fingers a chalkstone, that I believe is worthy of a place in Mr. Hunter’s collection of human miseries—he best knows whether it is qualified to be a candidate there—I do know that on *delivery*, I had it weighed, and its weight was four grains and a half; and with two detached bits, five grains. I little thought when I began my own museum that it would be increased by curiosities from my own person—nor is this the first,

¹⁶ Piozzi, *Thraliana* 1. 67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 1.533. The words to the “Song of Alknomook” are quoted by Piozzi, *op. cit.* 1. 534, and are found on pp. 79–80 of Hunter, *op. cit.*

¹⁸ Walpole, *Letters* (ed. Toynbee) 14. 412–13. Lady Herries was the former Catherine Foote, niece of Horace Walpole’s intimate friend Horace Mann, Envoy to Tuscany. She

was first married to Colonel Ross of Cromartie, later, in 1777, to Sir Robert Herries, banker, four years M.P. for Dumfries Burghs. She held weekly conversation parties for the bluestockings.

¹⁹ Walpole, “Book of visitors at Strawberry Hill,” *Correspondence* (Yale ed.) 12. 217–74.

though the most magnificent; nor would probably be the last, were I likely to go my full time with two- or three-and-twenty others, of which I am *pregnant*—I must not say *big*, as a word unsuitable to my skeleton—my fingers literally resembling the bag of eggs in a fowl, as you may have observed.²⁰

The visit by the Hunters that Walpole anticipated never took place: just a fortnight later Walpole was writing to his young correspondent Mary Berry: "I have just heard that Dr. [sic] Hunter is dead suddenly at St. George's Hospital. . . . I am heartily concerned for her, who you know is a great favourite with me. You will not see me soon sitting between Lady Louisa and Mrs. Carter!"²¹

Walpole continued to regret the loss of Mrs. Hunter's companionship, and the following month he wrote again to Mary Berry from Strawberry Hill: "What could I do with myself in London? All my playthings are here, and I have no playfellows left there! Lady Herries's and poor Mrs. Hunter's are shut up."²²

But the exact magnitude for his feelings towards Anne is probably best revealed in a spontaneous and self-explanatory letter of 20 October 1793 to Nares:

I am exceeding grieved for the great misfortune that has happened to Mrs. Hunter, and I heartily regret the very amiable Doctor. This is what I must in truth and justice say to everybody on this melancholy occasion, though I hope less necessary to say to you than to most persons, as I trust you are persuaded of the sincere regard I had for both. But I am so circumstanced, that I flatter myself you will forgive me as my friend for consulting you in my distress. Mrs. Hunter (for which I shall always acknowledge myself infinitely obliged to her, as it proves her being convinced of my perfect esteem and friendship for her) has ordered me to be acquainted with her great loss. The letter is signed *M. Baillie*—unfortunately I do not know whether the notice comes to me from a lady or a gentleman, and I should be miserable to return an improper answer—indeed I am more miserable not to be able to return an immediate answer. It would be too presuming to write to Mrs. Hunter herself, though my heart is warm with grief and gratitude. Be so good, dear Sir, as to advise me what to do; and allow me earnestly to entreat you whenever you shall have an opportunity of seeing Mrs. Hunter, and of naming me without impropriety, to assure her that nothing but delicacy and respect for her unhappy situation, prevents me endeavouring this very moment to express the part I take in this sad event. Mrs. Hunter has before and now honoured me by distinguished goodness; and I should be ungrateful indeed, and insensible too, if I did not feel her kindness as thankfully, as I thoroughly honour and respect her virtues and talents.

²⁰ Walpole, *Letters* (ed. Toynbee) 15.211. ²¹ *vide* Walpole, *Correspondence* (Yale ed.)

²¹ *Ibid.* 15. 228–29. Lady Louisa was Lady Louisa Macdonald according to Mary Berry;

12.38.

²² Walpole, *Letters* (ed. Toynbee) 15. 248.

Excuse my giving you this trouble, dear Sir, and believe me with most true regard

Your most obedient
Humble servant,
ORFORD.²³

Anne, for her part, did not sever her ties with Walpole after her husband's death, as we know from his note of 1 June 1795: "LORD ORFORD is extremely obliged to Mrs. Dickenson for treating him with these very pretty and interesting lines of Mrs. Hunter, to whom he begs a thousand affectionate compliments."²⁴

Walpole's personal affection for Anne sheds interesting light on the characters of both. Walpole's respect for her talents is not, however, the only measure we have of her literary abilities.

She published two volumes of her writings, the *Poems*, dedicated to her son John Banks Hunter, published first in 1802, later to pass through a second edition, and the *Sports of the Genii*, published in 1804. The latter was dedicated "to the memory of Susan Macdonald, eldest daughter of the Right Honourable Archibald Macdonald, Lord Chief Baron of England, and the Right Honourable Lady Louisa Macdonald; who died at Lisbon, where she went for the recovery of her health, March, 1803, in the 22d year of her age."²⁵ According to the introduction to the *Sports of the Genii*, the volume took its "rise from the beautiful groups of winged boys which filled the portfolio of Miss MACDONALD, who was in the habit of imagining and sketching them with the greatest facility."²⁶ Anne's connections with the Macdonalds were clearly close ones. Her friendship with Lady Louisa has been noted above by Walpole. It was Sir Archibald who, as Lord Chief Baron, helped William Eden, first Baron Auckland, in procuring the King's Bounty for Anne when John died; from 1797 until 1802 she lived within a few doors of him in Duke Street, and she owned an enamel portrait of him by Bone, copied from an oil at Oxford, which she bequeathed in her will to his daughter.

Her words, however, were on the lips of more than those who read her

²³ *Ibid.*, 15. 229-30.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 15. 345. Mrs. Dickenson was Mary Hamilton Dickenson, a grand-daughter of the third Duke of Hamilton, an assistant sub-governess to the young daughters of George III, and a friend of various members of the bluestocking group, including Hannah More and Mrs. Delany.

²⁵ Hunter, *Sports of the Genii*, dedication, n.p. The dedicatory plate was drawn by

Masquerier, who painted Anne Hunter's portrait and perhaps that of her daughter, Lady Campbell. These portraits are reproduced by Peachey, *A Memoir of William & John Hunter*, facing p. 236 and p. 242. They are not reproduced here because it has been impossible to locate the present owner of the copyright of Peachey's book.

²⁶ Hunter, *op. cit.*, introduction, n.p.

published works, since many were set to music. "Her well-known stanzas of 'Queen Mary's Lament,'" wrote Nares in 1821, "were produced so long ago that they are frequently thought to have belonged to a prior age. Her song, 'In airy dreams,' stands almost in the same predicament. The death song of Alknomook, the Indian warrior, was written before many of those who sing it now were born."²⁷ She wrote, too, one of the versions of the "Flowers of the Forest." When George Thomson, the Scottish musician, was writing his Welsh airs in 1804, he sent seven of the melodies to Joanna Baillie for words and asked that Anne help in the task, since her volume "contains some charming songs"²⁸ and the musician therefore has had in mind "soliciting verses from her for the other airs not yet provided for."²⁹ Anne wrote three of the songs, "with which I flatter myself," wrote Joanna Baillie to Thomson, "you will be perfectly satisfied."³⁰

Some of her songs are still familiar today. "When Haydn passed a season in London," wrote Nares, "Mrs. Hunter became the Muse of that celebrated composer."³¹ She wrote the words for six of his twelve *English Canzonets*, including "The mermaid song," "Recollection," and the familiar "My mother bids me bind my hair." The remaining six were written by Charlotte Bertie, who perhaps was a friend of Anne's, since in 1791 she married the fourth Earl (later first Marquis) of Cholmondeley, nephew of Anne's friend Horace Walpole.

Many of John Hunter's recent biographers, following Stephen Paget, have claimed that Anne wrote the libretto for Haydn's oratorio, the "Creation." There is listed, furthermore, among the Hunter-Baillie MSS. at the Royal College of Surgeons among "Mrs. Ann Hunter's MS. Poems" a "MS. Libretto of Haydn's 'Creation'."³² The musician's biographers, however, commonly attribute the English text of the libretto to Lindley, and describe how Lindley's text was sent to Haydn by Salomon and subsequently translated into German by van Swieten.

It is difficult to reconcile these diametrically opposed accounts without direct access to the Royal College manuscript. There may be a clue in a letter from George Thomson, later a friend of Haydn's too, who wrote to Mrs. Hunter: "It is not the first time that your muse and Haydn's have met, as we see from the beautiful canzonets. Would that he had been

²⁷ Nares, *op. cit.* 7. 639.

²⁸ Hadden, *George Thomson*, 227.

²⁹ Hadden, *op. cit.* 228. Burns wrote the music for Thomson's *Select Collection of Scottish Airs*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Nares, *op. cit.* 7. 639.

³² Plarr, *Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Royal College of Surgeons of England*, 40.

directed by you about the words to *The Creation!* It is lamentable to see such divine music joined with such miserable broken English."³³ Out of its context, as it stands in Hadden's text, this fragment is difficult to interpret. It might signify either that Anne had nothing to do with the *Creation* whatsoever, or only that she was not consulted when the German version was retranslated back into English. Hadden, who himself wrote Thomson's biography and studied his letters, is one of the biographers of Haydn's who says explicitly that there can be no doubt but that Lindley wrote the libretto, and comments on Thomson's letter to Anne: "The words of *The Creation* are poor enough in all conscience; but it was only a trick of Thomson's to flatter Mrs. Hunter with the notion that she was capable of furnishing an oratorio libretto."³⁴ The mystery is one that cannot be solved this side of the Atlantic, but it is one that should be clarified in justice to the true author, whether Lindley or Anne Hunter.

There is one further fragment of evidence that reveals the nature of her contemporaries' reception of her lyrical efforts. In the extant pages of Robert Burns's Edinburgh *Common-place book* there stand exactly two poems, by pen other than his own, copied out by the poet; and these were both by Anne Hunter. They had been given to Burns by Dr. James Gregory,³⁵ so that Burns might judge, as Gregory wrote to him in a letter dated from Edinburgh 2 June 1789, "how much correctness and high polish enhance the value of such compositions."³⁶ Gregory's letter continued with a discussion of Burns's lines on the wounded hare, and said, "I wish you would give me another edition of them, much amended, and I will send it to Mrs. Hunter, who I am sure will have much pleasure in reading it,"³⁷ and he asked Burns also for a copy of the "Water fowl on Loch Turit" to send to Anne. A poetess of Scottish extraction could hardly hope for higher favor than being singled out for recognition by Burns; and Anne must have been highly edified indeed to know that her own work was sent to Burns as a model for him to emulate!

One of Anne's poems copied out by Burns under the title "A sonnet in the manner of Petrarch" was that published in 1802 as "Sonnet, after the death of Laura:"

³³ Hadden, *op. cit.* 288.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 288-89.

³⁵ Professor of the Practice of Medicine at Edinburgh. Burns owed another literary debt to the medical profession: Dr. James Currie, one of the earliest practitioners to take advantage of the clinical thermometer in the

treatment of disease, in 1800 edited anonymously the *Works of Robert Burns; with an account of his life, and a criticism on his writings*.

³⁶ Jack, "Burns's Unpublished Common-place Book," *Macmillan's Mag.* 40 (1879) 130.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

Come, tender thoughts, with twilight's pensive gloom,
 Come, tender thoughts, and soothe the soul of care,
 Soften remembrance, mitigate despair,
 And cast a gloom of comfort o'er the tomb.

Methinks again the days and years return
 When joy was young, and careless fancy smil'd,
 When hope with promises the heart beguil'd,
 When love illum'd the world, and happiness was born.

Where are ye fled, dear moments of delight!
 And thou, O best belov'd! alas no more
 The future can the faded past restore;
 Sunk in the shade of time's eternal night,
 For me remains alone, through ling'ring years.
 The melancholy muse, companion of my tears.³⁸

There is a haunting overtone of melancholy here that recurs through many of Anne's published lines; and it is difficult not to wonder whether Anne may have projected into her poetry some of her private regrets for hopes unfulfilled. Socially and intellectually, the Hunters were successful as judged by conventional standards. What, if anything, had she desired of life, that John had not provided? This we can never know; but we can divine something of what she gave to John.

John's biographers have emphasized his own impatience with Anne's parties in their home, but have omitted to point out explicitly to what degree her traits supplement his own. For John, who scorned the written word, to devote himself to the substantiality of flesh and bone, she was beauty intellectual and spiritual; for him, who was candor and bluntness, she was delicacy and charm. But more than that, for John who was irascible and turbulent and harassed, she was grace, serenity, and peace. Her contribution cannot be measured alone by the quantity and quality of her published lines, but must rather be evaluated in the light of what she gave to John, who has invested us with so strong a heritage.

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³⁸ Quoted from Hunter, *Poems*, 64; the second line of the sonnet is omitted by Jack. The other poem copied by Burns appeared as "To the Nightingale" in Hunter, *op. cit.* 35-36.

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